Libanius's more fluid view of religious identity. "Counterintuitively, Libanius, a worshipper of the gods who rarely wrote explicitly about religion, might be able to tell us more about the state of processes of Christianization in the fourth century than Chrysostom's preaching can" (29).

While Sandwell's arguments are largely persuasive, there are still opportunities for further discussion. Libanius's stance on the role of religion and its relation to the public sphere could usefully be compared to those of early Christian apologists, as they might reflect his minority status as much as the flexibility of "Greek" identity. Likewise, readers will need to maintain Sandwell's methodological sophistication in discussing the "private" and "internal life" of Libanius's religious identity, or risk re-creating outdated caricatures (in reverse) of Christian and "pagan" religion. Finally, I applaud Sandwell's successful efforts to decenter Christian categories, but in lauding Libanius's "feel for the game," she may too quickly dismiss Chrysostom's own sense for his society. Given Chrysostom's success, we must imagine that John the "golden mouth" also had a "feel for the game" that Sandwell does not acknowledge. Similarly, Sandwell stresses that Libanius, unlike Chrysostom, does the unexpected in making religion a private matter, and yet insists that Libanius consistently acted out of *habitus* while Chrysostom created novel expectations, leading his audience to stray from his ideals. As with any complex argument, Sandwell's claims will be further nuanced by those who follow her.

Sandwell's well-written book represents a significant and welcome contribution to scholarship. Drawing on the most recent work in the field and a variety of critical approaches, she weaves together a persuasive narrative that will productively challenge scholars to reshape and better nuance discussions of religious identity, allegiance, and interaction in late antiquity.

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Voting about God in Early Church Councils. By **Ramsay MacMullen**. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006. xii + 175 pp. $30 cloth.

What happened in early church councils? From the second century into the sixth century and beyond, Christian leaders met in such assemblies throughout the Roman Empire, although the preponderance were held in the

East. Some were local or regional events; others transcended geographical boundaries and were assemblies convoked by emperors and presided over by their agents. Councils also were multifaceted in purpose, simultaneously legislative bodies and theological colloquies that were fraught both with the rhetoric of the divine and the practicalities of hardball politics that intended to take no prisoners.

The theological debates and the political maneuvering in these ancient gatherings frequently have been studied and are well-known. MacMullen's aim is not again to tell that story, but instead to try to understand the backgrounds and the attitudes of the majority of the men who participated in the councils, that is, the "ordinary" bishops. From the early fourth century, as evidenced, for example, by c. 5 of the Council of Nicaea of the year 325, the bishops of a province were to meet in synods twice a year. Using sensible estimates about the number of existing dioceses, the number of councils held between the years 325 and 553 (the date of Constantinople II, counted as the Fifth Ecumenical Council) must have exceeded 15,000.

Although only about 250 of these assemblies can be named, an enumeration that testifies to how much information from the ancient world has been lost, these meetings and participation therein by bishops must have been a "familiar fact of life." Reliable quantitative information about episcopal attendance therein is scarce, but the sources, episodic as they are, reveal that the bishops did show up at councils. It is likewise difficult for modern scholars to achieve precision about social demographics in antiquity, but "a safe answer" is that conciliar participants would fall into the upper 10 percent on a social grid measured according to wealth, pre-episcopal occupation, and the level of esteem in which others held them.

Following an introduction, which contains useful information about the historiography of conciliar *acta*, the work is divided into six chapters. Chapter 2, "The Democratic Element," assembles an impressive array of information about popular behavior in the Ancient World. It is, of course, not democracy in modern terms, but crowds possessed cumulative power; and those in attendance in church councils brought with them expectations generated from urban public life that provided a sense of how things should be done and what a proper response to certain actions should be. Chapter 3, "The Cognitive Element," deals with the level of intellectual sophistication one could expect to find in the mind of an ordinary bishop. Although their voices were registered in conciliar decisions, it seems to be the case that many of them had trouble following the theological debates in which they participated, and loyalties were more political and personal than doctrinal. Chapter 4, "The 'Supernatural' Element," points out the profound religious character of the age of late antiquity. Drawing on the work of A. H. M. Jones (whose photo appears on 46), this chapter describes the religious link

between bishops of the time and the potentially volatile world of monks. Chapter 5, "The Violent Element," deals with the violence concomitant with the fourth- and fifth-century theological debates. The final two chapters, "Preliminaries" and "Councils in Action," finally move to specific details about the operations of synods. This includes the interplay between the secular imperial and the ecclesiastical forces in the planning and management of these assemblies.

In particular, the Council of Chalcedon, convened in the year 451, serves as a laboratory of sorts where many of these elements can be found in action. This fundamentally important synod defined the theological union in one *hypostaseis* of Christ's two "natures," the divine and the human. Discussion about Chalcedon's location, participants, and debates are provided, including much about Dioscorus, patriarch of Alexandria, who was to be condemned by the council: "A little under two hundred bishops gave in their voice-vote to this outcome" (94), a number somewhat fewer than the 350 bishops who actually were at the synod.

The historical world in which this volume is set provides the building blocks of classical Trinitarian theology. But the intricacies of those theological struggles and the resulting dogmatic definitions per se are not the book's concern. This is, rather, an inquiry about the human dynamics among conciliar participants—those who were responsible for these definitions and who voted about God, to echo the book's title. The author's occasionally granulated prose is not always easy to follow, yet a reader who does follow the trail will be rewarded with a fresh and perceptive perspective on a story that traditionally has been told mainly about ideas, not about people.

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There is no Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire. By **Michael Gaddis**. Transformation of the Classical Heritage 39. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005. xiv + 401 pp. $49.95 cloth.

Scholars have long tried to answer the seeming paradox of how Christians—themselves the object of intermittent violence in the first three centuries and believers in a Christ who exhorted his followers to "turn the other cheek"—could support coercive violence against their perceived enemies in the fourth century. Gaddis's book presents an important argument about this vexed